THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir. No formal proposa' has been received from the State Government/Road Authority till now, as required under extant rules.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Assistance to Prevent Derailments

2297. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sought any outside assistance to prevent rail derailments;

(b) whether it is a fact that frequent accidents are causing uncertainly about rail travel;

(c) whether the Railways are not making a concerted effort to reduce accidents; and

(d) the steps proposed to make better efforts to reduce accidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No direct assistance of any outside agencies has been sought to prevent rail accidents. However, in case of major accidents, inquiries are being conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety under Ministry of Civil Aviation. In some accident cases judicial enquiry is also being conducted. The recommendation made by these Committees are considered for improvement in system to prevent rail derailments.

(b) No, Sir. Number of accidents has come down progressively over the years in this decade barring 1997-98 when there was a slight increase in number of accidents.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Railways have according the highest priority for the safety of passengers and taken precautionary safety measures to avert rail accidents. Steps taken to bring down the incidence of train accidents on Indian Railways are as under:—

(i) The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.

(ii) Modification of the Signalling circuitry is being carried out to minimise chances of human error in causing accidents,

(iii) Auxiliary Warning System for giving advance warning about 'Signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Mumbai suburban sections.

(iv) There has been progressive increase in use of Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

(v) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.

(vi) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(vii) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, maintenance depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

(viii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmaned level crossing and visibility for drivers has been improved.

(ix) Audio-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

(x) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passenger trains.

(xi) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of simulators for training of drivers.

(xii) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

(xiii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

(xiv) Periodical safety drivers are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.

Decongesting the Rail Line

2298. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken to decongest rail lines, to ensure railway safety;

(b) whether 160 trains are running on a line, meant for not more than 60 trains per day; and

(c) whether Government have any programme of phasing out the old, mechanically connected coaches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Safety in train operation is being ensured by improving the infrastructure facilities, maintenance of Track and rolling stock, and developing the human resources, and not by decongesting or reducing the number of trains run in any section.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Phasing out of old, mechanically condemned coaches is a continous process on Indian Railways, New coaches are manufactured every year which go towards replacement of condemned coaching stock and also to provide additional services.

Broad Line Projects in Himachal Pradesh

2299. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some broad gauge rail line projects from Nangal to Talwara and from Kalka to Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh have been undertaken;

(b) if so, the date of launching of each project, estimated amount spent so far, with progress made on each as on 15th November, 1998, alongwith completion target fixed in each case;

(c) whether the Ministry propose to undertake some more broad gauge rail line projects in Himachal Pradesh in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 to increase the passenger and freight earnings; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Work is in progress on Nangal Dam-Talwara project. Regarding new line from Kalka to Parwanoo, it is included in the budget and would be taken up after the requisite clearances have been received from the Planning Commission who have been approached for the. same.

(b) The Nangal Dam-Talwara project was taken up in 1981-82. The 17 km. long section from Nangal Dam to Una was